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February 5, 2018

Councilmember Jose Huizar
Councilmember Curren Price
200 N Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Re: Establishing a regular cleaning schedule for freeway underpasses

Dear Councilmembers,

Founded in 2005, the South Park Business Improvement District (SPBID) is a 52-block region in Downtown Los Angeles that includes the STAPLES Center, Los Angeles Convention Center, L.A. LIVE, and a rapidly growing residential population. Our core role is to ensure South Park is clean and safe – allowing residents and businesses to thrive, and ensuring that Los Angeles' entertainment and convention hub is competitive.

Our district boundaries are the 110 Freeway to Broadway (West to East), and the 10 Freeway to 9th St/Olympic (South to North). While freeway underpasses themselves are out of district, their impact on our community and operations is significant.

Before STAPLES Center and L.A. LIVE opened in 1999, South Park was a sleepy, non-residential area of Downtown. Since then it has grown into a vibrant community of apartment buildings and condos, restaurants, and small businesses. The ingress and egress into our district, and all of Downtown, have an inextricable impact to the resident, worker, and visitor experience. Currently, those ingress and egress points are unsafe and unsightly.

In 2017 the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority reported a City-wide homeless population of over 34,000 individuals – it's not surprising that the underpasses are serving as makeshift shelters for people without homes, but individuals living under freeway underpasses are in need of real services, and we can do better as a city. Building off your leadership on Proposition HHH and Measure H, the City and County must work together to make sure these individuals have access to quality mental and physical care, and the basic dignity provided by safe shelter and bathroom access.

SOUTH PARK BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

1100 S Flower St #3400, Los Angeles, CA 90015

www.southpark.la



Once a month, our clean team leaves our district to remove trash, human waste, and drug paraphernalia – including used needles – from these out-of-district underpasses. We view the cleanliness and safety concerns posed by the underpasses as a real threat to the continued growth and pedestrianization of Downtown, and ask the City to design and implement a regular cleanup schedule. We request coordination with the State Government and Caltrans to ensure that Caltrans property is also cleaned regularly. We also request that lights be repaired and installed to help deter criminal activity.

Beyond the safety and sanitation concerns the current usage elicits, these underpasses represent a missed opportunity. Cities like Chicago, Portland, and Houston have turned underpasses into locations for public art installations, skate parks, and bike paths. With regular cleaning and some creative place-making, Downtown's underpasses could function as beautiful public space, and an inspiring gateway to our growing city.

Thank you for your work thus far and for hearing our concerns. We look forward to continuing to work together on this important matter.

Sincerely,

Ellen Riotto
Executive Director
South Park Business Improvement District

Cc: Assembly Member Miguel Santiago
Supervisor Hilda Solis
Mayor Eric Garcetti
Councilmember Gil Cedillo
Caltrans District 7 Director Carrie Bowen